

COCKERMOUTH  
URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

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Annual Report

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH,

D. J. McLEISH, M.A., B.Sc., M.D., D.P.H.

(Fellow of the Society of Medical Officers of Health),

FOR THE YEAR 1914.

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TOGETHER WITH THE SUMMARY OF WORK  
OF THE INSPECTOR.

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1915.

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## COCKERMOUTH URBAN DISTRICT.

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To the Chairman and Members of the Cockermouth  
Urban District Council.

GENTLEMEN,

I have pleasure in presenting my First Annual  
Report to your Council.

As will be seen from the report the death rate and  
infantile mortality rate for the year are regrettably high.  
The lesson to be learned from this is that everything  
possible should be done to make the town as healthy  
and sanitary as possible.

I have to thank the Sanitary Inspector, Mr. Reilly,  
for his help in compiling some of the statistics for this  
report, more especially with regard to Housing In-  
spections; and I take this opportunity of thanking all  
those who have in any way aided me in my work as  
Medical Officer of Health for the town.

I remain, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

D. J. McLEISH,

Medical Officer of Health.

4, Fern Bank,  
Cockermouth.

March 17th, 1915.

# PRINCIPAL VITAL STATISTICS.

	England and Wales	England and Wales less the 242 largest towns.	Cockermouth Urban District Average for previous 5 years		
	1914	1914	1914	1913	
Birth rate	23·6	21·9	25·2	20·9	23·56
Death rate {	Crude	13·9	13·3	16·4	14·1
	Standardised	13·6	12·2	14·9	12·8
Infantile Mortality Rate	105	93·	127	86	97
Pulmonary Tuberculosis Death Rate			·8	1·59	1·28
Zymotic Death Rate			1·2	·6	·78
Cancer Death Rate			1·8	1·0	1·31

# REPORT.

The area of the district in statute acres (land and Area inland water) is 2425

The geological formation of the larger portions of the district is gravel with Skiddaw slate and limestone on the boundary covered in parts with glacial drifts, boulder clay, and waterborne sediment, sand and gravel. The town is intersected by two very fast flowing rivers, the Cocker which flows from lake Crummock (thereby draining the Buttermere, Loweswater and Lorton Vales), and joins the other, the Derwent, which flows from lakes Derwentwater and Bassenthwaite, about the centre of your Urban area.

The climate is very variable, and prevailing winds Climate are from the south-west with a heavy rainfall.

1914 Josiah Hall, Esq., Elmhurst, Cockermouth.

MONTH.	INCHES OF RAIN.
January	2.93
February	5.50
March	3.65
April	1.37
May	2.26
June	1.82
July	6.24
August	3.58
September	2.60
October	1.17
November	5.81
December	6.91
TOTAL	43.84

Rainfall in 1910—41.89 inches			
„	1911—45.06	„	Rainfall Records
„	1912—44.03	„	
„	1913—39.78	„	
„	1914—43.84	„	

Cockermouth is a market town. Most of the inhabitants work at the usual businesses and trades of an ordinary small town. There is a Thread Mill in the adjoining rural district, employing a gradually diminishing amount of female labour (about 200 hands). A certain number work about the Cattle Marts, and a few find employment in the Coal Mines and a Granite Quarry, outside the district.

The census population of 1911, of 5203 showed a Population reduction of 152 on the census population of 1901. This gives an estimated population for the middle of 1914 of 5153.

There is a Nursing Home of eight beds in the Main Street. A new hospital with the same number of beds, is

Physical  
Features,  
etc

Climate

Rainfall  
Records

Chief  
Occupation  
of the  
Inhabitants

Hospital  
Accommo-  
dation



being built just outside the town on an open site. The Workhouse with its hospital contains about 180 inmates about one sixth of whom are sick persons. Most of these belong to outside districts.

**Persons per House**

The number of inhabited houses in 1911 was 1167, and the average number of persons per house was 4·4. In 1901 the number of inhabited houses was 1156, and the average number of persons was 4·6.

**VITAL STATISTICS OF THE DISTRICT.**

**Births**

There were registered in the district 135 births (69 males and 66 females).

Births in town.—Males 63 ; females 62 ; total 125.

Births in Workhouse.—Males 6 ; females 4 ; total 10.

Of these births 13 were illegitimate (7 males and 6 females) including 5 males and 3 females in the Workhouse. Seven of the illegitimate, and two of the legitimate births belonged to the outside districts so that the net births amount to 126, and the birth rate is 25·2 per 1000 of the population as compared with 23·56 the average birth rate for the preceding five years.

This is calculated on the estimated population less the estimated number of residents in the Workhouse who belong to outside districts.

**BIRTH RATES FOR 1914.**

<i>England and Wales</i>	..	..	..	23·6
<i>145 Smaller Towns</i>	..	..	..	23·6
<i>England and Wales (less 242 largest towns)</i>	..			21·9
<i>Cockermouth</i>	..	..	..	25·2

**Deaths**

The total number of deaths registered was 101.

To obtain the correct number of deaths for the district 25 deaths of non-residents must be subtracted, and 6 deaths of residents dying without the district must be added. This leaves 82 deaths of persons whose usual residence is within the district, and corresponds to a death rate of 16·4 per 1000 of the population, (allowance is made for the portion of non-residents in the Workhouse, whose deaths are transferred to other districts). The average death-rate for the previous five years was 14·56 per 1000 of the population.

**THE STANDARDISED DEATH-RATE.**

This is the death-rate that would have been recorded if the age and sex of the population in Cockermouth corresponded to the age and sex of the population of all England at the 1901 census. N.B. It will be readily

understood for instance that if there were an abnormally large proportion of old persons or very young children in a district the death-rate would be high irrespective of unhealthy conditions, and accordingly it is necessary to standardise the death-rate so that it can be compared with the rest of the country.

The standardised death-rate for this district is 12·8 per 1000 of the population. The following table is therefore a true comparison between Cockermouth and the rest of the Country :—

<i>England and Wales</i>	..	..	..	13·6
<i>145 Smaller Towns</i>	..	..	..	12·9
<i>England and Wales (less 242 largest towns)</i>	..	..	..	12·2
<i>Cockermouth</i>	..	..	..	14·9

This is a high death-rate for a small urban area. It is larger than that of all the divisions of England and Wales shown above, and is equal to that of the 97 great towns including London which this year has a standardised death rate of 14·9.

Year	At all ages	Under 1 year	1 and under 2 years	2 and under 5 years	5 and under 15 years	15 and under 25 years	25 and under 65 years	65 and upwards	Ages at Death
1914	82	16	2	...	2	1	28	33	
1913	71	9	2	3	1	5	24	27	
1912	63	6	2	3	3	2	19	28	
1911	75	12	3	4	2	4	21	32	
1910	88	23	...	3	3	4	26	29	
1909	87	11	...	3	4	5	34	30	
1908	92	21	...	5	1	3	29	33	
1907	86	11	...	11	2	2	25	35	
1906	78	17	...	6	3	3	25	24	
1905	90	15	...	5	...	5	33	32	

### INFANTILE MORTALITY.

Sixteen deaths of infants under 1 year of age were registered during the year. This gives an infantile mortality rate of 127 per 1,000 births. Infantile Mortality

This is a very high rate of mortality and compares unfavourably with the rest of the country as is seen from the following table :—

Cockermouth Urban District	..	127
England and Wales	..	105
England and Wales less the 242 largest towns		93

It must be remembered however that in a small district the rate is liable to vary widely from year to year as we are dealing with a small number of deaths.

The average infantile mortality for a period of years is a better test of the health of the district.

The figures for the last ten years are :

1914	1913	1912	1911	1910	1909	1908	1907	1906	1905
127	86	54	87	176	80	160	93	119	142

which give an average infantile mortality rate for the last ten years of 112 per 1000 births.

But though the average is not so high, nevertheless the rate is too high for a small urban district, and as much of this mortality is preventable, it is necessary to strive to improve it, and to prevent many of these infant deaths.

The following table shows the nature of the diseases which have caused this mortality in past years, and also where the large increase has occurred during the present year :—

Groups of Diseases	Diseases	Infant Deaths under 1 year 1910—1913		Infant Deaths under 1 year 1914		Infantile Mortality per 1000 births 1910—1913	Infantile Mortality per 1000 births 1914	Percentage Increase or Decrease
Infectious Diseases	Measles	2		0				Increase 420
	Whooping Cough	1	3	4	4	6.1	31.7	
	Diphtheria	0		0				
Tuberculous Diseases	Tuberculous Meningitis	3		0				Decrease 100
	Abdominal Tuberculosis	2	5	0	0	10.2	0.0	
	Other Tuberculous Diseases	0		0				
		0		0				
Respiratory Diseases	Bronchitis	6		2				Increase 55
	Pneumonia	4	10	2	4	20.4	31.7	
Diseases mainly dependent on Improper Feeding	Convulsions	1		1				Decrease 40
	Diarrhoea	4		0				
	Enteritis	4	13	1	2	26.5	15.8	
	Gastritis	3		0				
	Rickets	1		0				
Diseases dependent on Ante-natal Conditions	Congenital Malformation	0		0				Decrease 57
	Premature Birth	8		1				
	Atelectasis	0	9	0	1	18.3	7.9	
	Syphilis	1		0				
Diseases partly dependent on Anti-natal conditions and partly on Improper Feeding	Atrophy, Debility, and Marasmus	6	6	4	4	12.2	31.7	Increase 160
Other Causes	...	...	5	0	1	10.2	7.9	Decrease 23
Totals		51		16		104	127	Increase 22
Total Births, 1910—1913		...		...		489		
Total Births, 1914		...		...		126		



It is evident from the above that the diseases causing the mortality are in order of magnitude :

- Diseases dependant on " Improper feeding "
- Diseases dependent on " Ante-natal conditions "
- Diseases dependent on " Respiratory diseases "
- Diseases dependent on " Infectious diseases "

The most helpful method of attacking diseases due to improper feeding is by instruction of mothers in the home by health visitors. This is now being done by the County health visitor who was appointed in October 1914.

The question of adopting the notification of Births Act 1907 was brought before your Council some years ago and it was decided not to adopt it, with its corollary of appointing a health visitor.

This act was adopted by the County Council during the year under review, and health visitors were appointed for all areas except Whitehaven, Workington and Penrith which had already appointed them. This no doubt is a more economical method than appointing part time officers for small districts.

A school for mothers has also been started in the town by a voluntary agency during the year, and the County Health Visitor and the District Nurse attend these once a week, to give advice to mothers. Your Medical Officer attends once a fortnight for the same purpose.

Respiratory diseases will be reduced by reducing the prevalence of infectious diseases, such as measles and whooping cough, and when every mother recognises that a stuffy ill-ventilated room is the last place in which to keep a young child. In this connection something needs to be done to improve the ventilation of the houses in your district. A room with a fixed window, or with a small casement of 6 by 4 inches, is a very unhealthy place. No authority responsible for the health of the people should rest satisfied until every house in their district is supplied with its just proportion of fresh air. A supply of pure air is just as necessary as a supply of pure water.

The prevention of diseases due to imperfect health of the mother before the child's birth is a question of good healthy homes, and a sufficient wage for the father.

A condition of things where the wage earner cannot afford to pay for a healthy house, if such were forthcoming, is economically wrong, and one cannot get away from the fact that it takes its toll of infant deaths, as well as causing a large amount of unnecessary less fatal illness.

The Registrar General's report for 1911 show that rates of mortality under 50 per 1000 births are not uncommon among professional classes, and among the children of medical practitioners the rate was as low as 39 per 1000 births.

As Mr. John Burns stated at the last conference on "infantile mortality," "What the medical practitioner has done for his own children he could do for others if it were possible that he could be given a free hand."

The infectious diseases mainly responsible for infantile mortality are measles and whooping cough, and at another time I shall draw attention to a scheme put forward by Dr. Newsholme, the chief Medical Officer to the Local Government Board, for the prevention of these diseases.

If these diseases could even be warded off until the child had reached the age of 5 years, their fatality would be reduced to a negligible point.

The feature of the table which has special reference to this year's high figure is the increase among infectious disease deaths, and also among respiratory diseases which to a certain extent are sequelae of measles and whooping cough.

Fortunately measles was not prevalent during the year or these figures would be much greater.

Whooping cough is often considered a small matter, not even worth closing a school for, but at present it causes more deaths than all the other infectious diseases, except measles.

#### Senile Death-rate

Of the 82 deaths belonging to the district, 33 were of persons who had attained the age of 65 years and upwards, which gives a senile death-rate of 40 per cent as compared with 38 per cent for 1913.

#### Inquests

There were two inquests during the year.

#### Uncertified Deaths

Four deaths were uncertified.

#### Cancer

Cancer caused 9 deaths during the year, giving a rate of 1.8 per 1000 of the population as compared with 1.0 per 1000 for 1913.

#### Tuberculous Diseases

Pulmonary tuberculosis caused 4 deaths, and there was 1 death from other forms of tuberculous disease.

The death-rate from pulmonary tuberculosis (consumption) is accordingly .8 per 1000 of the population as compared with 1.59 per 1000 for 1912. The following table gives the ages at death:—

Year	At all ages	Under 1 year	1—5	5—15	15—25	25—65	Over 65 years
1914	4	...	...	...	...	3	1
1913	8	...	...	...	4	4	...
1912	4	...	...	...	2	2	1
1911	4	...	...	...	3	1	...
1910	13	...	...	...	3	9	...
1909	6	...	...	...	2	4	...
1908	6	...	...	...	0	6	...
1907	8	1	1	...	1	5	...
1906	6	...	...	1	3	2	...
1905	7	...	...	...	2	5	...

The following table gives the seven principal zymotic diseases and the deaths recorded from each:—

			1912	1913	1914
Smallpox	...	...	0	0	0
Measles	...	...	4	2	0
Whooping Cough	...	...	1	0	5
Diphtheria	...	...	0	0	0
Fever { Typhus	...	...	0	0	0
{ Enteric	...	...	0	0	0
{ Continued	...	...	0	0	0
Diarrhoea	...	...	3	1	1
Scarlet Fever	...	...	1	0	0
Total	...	...	9	3	6

This gives a zymotic death-rate of 1.2 per 1000 of the population as compared with .6 per 1000 for 1913.

No other diseases call for comment.

## SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DISTRICT.

Water Supply :—This is by gravitation from Crummock Lake. and is ample in quantity and very pure.

The supply is a constant one. Some trouble is caused by corrosion of the pipes; and the water every now and then is dirty from stirring up of this sediment.

Rivers and Streams :—A considerable amount of pollution of the rivers and streams flowing through the town takes place both from the amount of tipping of refuse by private individuals, and by drainage of slop water. Notices have been erected at various points calling attention to the penalties attached to tipping refuse into streams, but apparently this has little effect.



From the Sanitary Inspector's report it is evident that 5 owners during the year have ceased to pollute the streams either with drainage from tanpits, or slop water.

#### Drainage and Sewerage

Drainage and sewerage :—The question of the drainage and sewage disposal of the town has been prominently before your Council during the year. Your Council were unsuccessful in defending an action taken against the Council for flooding of a tanyard from the gully connected to your sewer.

The County Council have served notice on your Council to abate the pollution of the river caused by sewage from your outfall works passing in a crude state into the river. A very excellent report on your sewerage system was presented to your Council by Mr. Beswick of Whitehaven, a Sanitary Engineer at present engaged on Government drainage works.

This report showed that there were many defects in your sewers, and that your outfall works were quite inadequate. The report brought out prominently the fact that a large amount of river water is gaining access to your sewers the amount of liquid at the outlet being on a moderate estimate more than three times that which can be accounted for by the water supply to the town and the rain water carried by the sewers.

This is a matter calling for early attention by your Council as this excessive flow, besides making the question of dealing with the sewage at the outlet almost hopeless must also be having a very bad effect on the brick work of your sewers.

Your Council have decided to lay an accessory sewer from the Fitz Bridge to the tanks, and another from the tanks to the sewage field though your Surveyor has recorded his opinion that this will not abate the pollution of the river as it will not even then be possible to close the outlet through the Winnah Dub field without flooding the tanks.

A perusal of Mr. Beswick's report brings one to the same conclusion as it is evident that from the tanks to the field the question is not one of capacity of pipes but of level.

It would be wiser to first relay the sewers in the Bitter Beck and below the Victoria Bridge where the leakage is evidently occurring.



Your tanks are quite inadequate in size, and being close to the main Workington Road a considerable nuisance is caused by the periodic emptying of them.

On account of the levels a large part of your sewage field cannot be used.

Closet Accommodation :—The 5 midden privies, mentioned in the Inspector's Report as converted to water closets, are, as far as can be ascertained, the last midden privies that exist in the town. As will be seen from the Housing Report much of the closet accommodation in the town is insufficient. Closet Accommodation

Scavenging :—The domestic refuse is collected twice weekly in uncovered carts. These carts should be covered. No fixed receptacles are in use, but there are many unsuitable moveable receptacles used for putting out the refuse. This is all the more objectionable inasmuch as the majority of the houses have no back doors or outhouses and consequently the refuse must be kept in these receptacles indoors for several days. Scavenging

Sanitary Inspections of District :—These have been carried out during the year, and have been combined with housing inspections. The detailed results of these are found in the Sanitary Inspector's Report, and in the housing report. Sanitary Inspection

Premises and Occupations that can be controlled by Byelaws and Regulations.—

Offensive Trades :—There are 9 in your district and several of these are the cause of nuisances. Offensive Trades

There are 3 fellmongers. No nuisance has arisen from these.

There are 3 Knackers and Bone-boilers. These are premises which have been licensed within the past 2 years:

One was established during the year under review, and is fitted with an up-to-date steam cylinder, and with a large filter bed and septic tank. No nuisance has arisen from it.

One was licensed in November 1913, in the St. Helens district of the town. The boiling is done in an open boiler and so far there has been little complaint about this though it is most undesirable to license premises so near the town unless a steam plant is put in.

On the other hand a licensee has good ground for complaint, when his licence is granted without a steam plant being insisted on, if he is called on next year to instal the much more expensive fitting. Nevertheless, if nuisance is complained of by the inhabitants, it is the Council's duty to insist on the more efficient installation.

The drainage of these premises has been the cause of great nuisance, and pollution of the adjoining stream. The tanks are small, more especially the filtering tank, and the wall of at least the first tank is of open stonework. No purification has been taking place in these, in fact they have caused the drainage to become more foetid than ever, and in addition the liquid has oozed through the walls into the stream, and when this is low, as it is in summer, it has caused a serious nuisance. Nuisance is also caused by a large objectionable midden heap kept on the premises. This licence has not been renewed.

The third knacker's business is a very primitive arrangement, but as it is well out of the town it has not so far caused any nuisance.

There is a gut scraper's business in Waterloo Street. Towards the end of last year it changed hands and prior to this had been kept in a filthy condition. I advised then that the licence should be discontinued for this building but your Council decided against this though it was supported by your Sanitary Committee.

The new tenant has kept it very much cleaner, but the smell from it has proved a great nuisance to this thickly populated neighbourhood. It is no place for such a business. It could be stopped by the simple process of refusing to relicence it, as the licence is an annual one. Of course there would be some hardship on the owner who has spent money on the building, but at present there is a continuing hardship on the inhabitants of this neighbourhood which is easily the greater hardship of the two.

There are two tallow-melting businesses in the town.

Tallow melting always causes a nuisance, and these are no exception to the general rule. To lessen the nuisance in both cases boiling is done during the night, but still they are the cause of considerable annoyance in the neighbourhood. As with the gut-scrapers, there is no fault to find with the condition of the premises with regard to cleanliness, only it is impossible to boil fat near houses without causing a nuisance.



Needless to say such business should be outwith the town, and no fresh business of this kind should be allowed. As these are old registered trades all that can be done to abate the nuisance is to prove before a court that they cause a nuisance, and that "the best *practicable* means are not adopted to render innocuous all vapour emitted during the process of melting." It is possible if the vapour were passed through a fire, or into a suitable condensing apparatus, or if both methods were adopted, as suggested in the latter part of byelaw 36, that the vapour might be rendered less offensive.

As a guiding principle in the licensing of any fresh offensive trades in the town I would suggest that any business where open boiling is carried on should be on the outskirts of the town, and that any business where the drainage is offensive, as for example in gut scraping, should also be on the outskirts of the town and connected to the sewer beyond the populous districts of the town.

There are two common lodging houses in the town. **Lodging Houses**  
One of these buildings is getting into a ruinous condition, and unless it is looked better after will soon be unfit to be a lodging house. These premises are regularly inspected.

Schools:—The water supply of the schools is the **Schools** same as that of the town.

The drainage of All Saints school, which had become very defective, was put in order during the year.

The action taken to prevent spread of infection in schools conforms to that of the County generally. Contacts from infected homes are excluded, and the schools are closed to prevent the spread of an epidemic, either by the Medical Officer of Health with the subsequent approval of the School Medical Officer, or by the School Medical Officer acting independently, as for instance when the attendance is so reduced in the presence of an epidemic that the efficiency of the school is greatly impaired.

Milk Supply:—Veterinary inspection of the cattle in **Milk Supply** dairies supplying milk to the town is carried out and reports are made to the Council quarterly. No disease has been reported among the cattle during the year.

Structurally several of the cowsheds within the town are not all that could be desired: the floors are cobbled, and consequently the drainage is not efficient, the byre

becoming impregnated with urine. In some cases the ventilation provided is not used properly, and consequently the cows live in a very unhealthy atmosphere. In other cases the manure is not sufficiently often removed from the premises, large accumulations taking place.

The cattle are in several cases not kept clean enough, the flanks and tail being in a very dirty condition with consequent fouling of the milk.

Cowkeepers do not seem to realise that it is not sufficient to strain the milk thoroughly. This removes the grosser dirt, but it does not affect the thousands of organisms which injuriously affect the milk and which may produce their effect on infant life.

The flanks and tail of all milking cows should be cleaned daily if the cow is a dirty one so that the cow is always in a reasonably cleanly condition, and the udders and hands of the milkers should be thoroughly washed before milking. Clean overalls should be used while milking. Milk is one of the most important of our foods, and is the main diet of infants and of the sick. Every effort should therefore be made to produce it under the most cleanly conditions.

#### Slaughter- Houses

Slaughterhouses :—There is one small public slaughterhouse in which very little slaughtering has been done during the year. It is not a good building being a back-to-back building without through ventilation. The floor was relaid with concrete during the year. The flags when lifted showed what an unsuitable flooring flags are as the soil beneath was very foul.

Most of the slaughtering is done in private slaughterhouses which are unfortunately situated near houses in a closely populated part of the town.

In two cases improvements have been made during the year, the floors having been concreted.

One slaughterhouse an old registered building has been reported to your Council during the year. It is an old registered building which is quite unfit for use as a slaughterhouse.

The slaughtering takes place in what might be called the back kitchen of the house—a room opening out of the kitchen.



The floor is composed of loose flags and the subsoil must be very foul.

The lair has a cobbled floor, has no drainage of any kind, and is built against the back wall of a row of cottages which has a loose stone wall unprotected in any way.

The tenants of the cottages complain of the smell in their cottages though there are no windows at the back. This is caused by the soakage into the ground and walls of the cottages.

Nuisance is caused by the lack of drainage, and improper floor and walls. Also it is a case of keeping animals so as to be a nuisance.

As slaughtering is done in six different places and at various times even on Sunday which is a regular slaughtering day at least with some of the butchers no efficient inspection of the meat can be carried out. No tuberculous carcasses have been condemned during the year, and if any have been tuberculous they would be surrendered under the insurance plan to which all the butchers subscribe.

As far as is known the poorer animals are bought by butchers outside the town none of whom send meat back into the town.

The Workhouse and Industrial School have been supplied during the year from without the district. The character of this meat has been quite good.

The sale of Food and Drugs Acts, and the Milk and Cream Regulations, 1912, are administered by the County Council.

Housing :—The housing of the working classes in the Housing town is not satisfactory.

There is a great dearth of good dry light and airy working class houses with a minimum of 3 bedrooms, one for the parents, one for the girls and one for the boys.

The bulk of the working class houses have been built up courts and alleys and are subject to all the objections of this type of building.

(1) Lack of circulation of air about the buildings

(2) Poor lighting of the houses.

(a) because the alley is usually very narrow and other houses or buildings obstruct the light.

(b) because there is no right to light at the back and consequently there are no windows in the back wall.

(3) Poor ventilation on account of there being no windows or doors at the back, the houses, even where not actually back-to-back being of the same character from the health point of view. The ventilation of the houses is also poor on account of the old fashioned windows which have only a small casement made to open or which in some cases are entirely fixed. Other defects from which many of the houses suffer are dampness. The houses are mostly old, built of cobble, and have no damp proof course. This is contributed to in some cases by the fact that there is no right to have overhanging eaves at the back, and consequently the gutter has to be constructed on the top of the wall, and the rainwater conveyed round to the front. There are many damp houses.

Most of the houses are unprovided with sinks, and as a rule the water is not laid on in the house. This combined with the fact that there is usually no back door or outhouses makes the houses very inconvenient from the housewife's point of view.

There are not sufficient water closets provided. Such things as six houses to a water closet occur and three houses to one water closet are quite common.

I would suggest as a minimum that no new house be built without a separate closet, and that in old houses there be not less than one closet to every two houses.

On account of the poor condition of much of this old property and because there is no actual deficiency of houses of this kind the rents of houses in the town have reached a low point. As a matter of fact in many cases it is an ample return for the class of property considering its age and state of repair, but unfortunately the effect on building is very marked. No houses are being built. Low rents have done their work. It is part of a vicious circle. Low rents produce low wages, and when houses can be got at these low rents it is too risky a speculation for private individuals to build; (1) because the wages correspond to the rents of houses, and many could not afford an economic rent for a good house. (2) because even if this amount could be afforded tenants have become so accustomed to the cheap houses that it would be difficult to move them.

The only solution is for a local authority to build houses as part of their efforts to improve the public health, and after the war this ought to be considered by your authority.



The advantages that a local authority have are :—

- (i) They can borrow money at a fair rate of interest.
- (ii) They do not require a profit. All that is required is sufficient return to keep them in order, and pay interest on loan : Consequently rents can be less.

(iii) If they actively discharge their duties under the Housing Acts they can prevent low rented, insanitary property being occupied at the expense of their own sanitary property.

No new houses have been built during the year.

### HOUSING INSPECTION.

This is a very important part of a Council's duty.

Housing  
Inspection

Prior to 1914 about 20 houses had been inspected under this Act in the whole town, and no action had been taken by your Council with regard to any houses under the Act except a few brought to your notice by the County Medical Officer.

Consequently as nothing had been done in four years people have got the impression that nothing need be done and landlords are consequently more difficult to move.

The question of inspection was brought before your General Purposes Committee in the beginning of the year, and it was proposed by your Medical Officer that at first in all cases where defects were found not sufficiently bad to call for closing of the house, an informal notice should be sent by the Housing Inspector pointing out the defects, and suggesting remedies.

This has not proved a success, and it is not worth continuing except in cases where we know from experience that the work will be done.

### TABULAR STATEMENT OF HOUSING INSPECTIONS.

Houses inspected in 1914	..	130 completely
		5 others partly (untenanted)
Houses without defects of any kind	..	23
Houses with defects of greater or less amount	..	112
Preliminary notices served during the year about		76
Results of these notices —		
Completely remedied	..	9
Partly remedied	..	2
Still defective	..	65

Represented to Council as unfit for human habitation	5
Closing orders served .. .. .	0
Results of such representation—	
Partly remedied .. .. .	3
Closed by owner .. .. .	1
At present untenanted .. .. .	1
Represented to owners as unfit for human habitation	2
Closed by owners .. .. .	2

Table required by Local Government Board under Article v Housing (Inspection of District) Regulations (1910).

Houses inspected under Sect. 17 of H. and T. P. Act 1909	135 *
No. of houses considered unfit for habitation	7
No. of representations to L. A. .. .. .	5
No. of closing orders .. .. .	0
Defective dwelling houses remedied without closing orders .. .. .	11 †
No. of houses rendered fit after closing orders ..	0

General character of defects found.

- (a) Inadequate water supply.
- (b) Insufficient and bad closet accommodation.
- (c) Bad drainage with old bottom outlet gullies.
- (d) Absence of sinks.
- (e) Bad ventilation mainly from blank back walls, absence of back doors, and prevalence of small casement windows.
- (f) Dampness.
- (g) Wash-house accommodation insufficient or in bad repair.
- (h) Various defects such as bad eaves, bad floors, unventilated and unlighted pantries, defective ceilings, broken stairs, bad walls.

Water supply. This was mostly outside the house in the yard or in a wash house, and in 20 houses there was only 1 tap between each 5 houses.

\* 5 only partly inspected.

† 2 only partly remedied.



## Closet Accommodation :—

1 closet for 6 houses	...	6 houses	} Quite insufficient
1 closet for 5	"	5 "	
1 closet for 4	"	4 "	
2 closets for 7	"	7 "	
1 closet for 3	"	44 "	
2 closets for 5	"	5 "	

1 closet for 2 houses ... 40 houses—Fairly  
satisfactory

1 closet for 1 house	...	23	"	} Adequate
2 closets for 1	"	1	"	

Drainage. Many bottom outlet gullies found.

Sinks. 20 only were found in 130 houses and 1 of these had no outlet.

Lighting. The lighting of the houses inspected was on the whole fairly good.

## Ventilation :—

True back-to-back houses	...	10	} Bad.
Functional back-to-back houses, that is houses with a blank back wall		50	

Back doors were present in 47 out 127 houses (in 8 this was not noted)	} Good.
Through ventilation provided by windows in 20 other houses	
Condition not noted in 8 houses.	

That is nearly 50 per cent. act as back-to-back houses.

Dampness was present in 61 out of 130 houses. This was noted as slight in 13 cases, very bad in 14 cases, and moderately bad in 34 cases.

## Wash house accommodation :—

## Insufficient :—

1 Wash house for 6 houses	..	6 houses
1 " 5 houses	..	10 houses
No " in		12 houses

## In bad repair :—

Wash house accommodation for 27 houses, that is bad floors, bad drainage, leaky roofs, windows broken or completely gone—in not a few cases simply tumble down outhouses.

## SANITARY ADMINISTRATION OF THE DISTRICT.

**Staff**                      Staff. There is one Sanitary Inspector who is also Housing Inspector and Surveyor.

The work of this official is increasing so much that it is becoming difficult to cope with it all.

**Hospital Accommodation**      Hospital Accommodation for infectious diseases : Apart from smallpox there is none available in the district. During the year the Cockermouth Rural District asked the Authority to combine with them in providing a hospital, and when this offer was not accepted offered to provide beds in a new hospital at a fixed charge. This offer also was not accepted.

The district forms part of the Derwent Joint Small-pox Hospital Board.

**Adoptive Acts**                      Adoptive Acts : The Public Health Amendment Acts of 1890 and 1907 are in force in the district.

Chemical and Bacteriological Work : A few examinations for the organisms of diphtheria and tuberculosis were conducted by the Clinical Research Association.

Also an analysis of the sewage effluent was conducted by Dr. Hellon.

## PREVALENCE AND CONTROL OVER ACUTE INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

None of the notifiable infectious diseases were prevalent during the year. All notified cases are visited and advice given to prevent spread of the disease.

As much isolation as is possible in cottage houses is insisted on, and disinfectants are supplied free by the Council. When the period of infectivity is at an end disinfection of the sick room is carried out by the Sanitary Inspector.

In the event of a serious epidemic the lack of a fever hospital would be severely felt as in most of the houses isolation is very imperfect. There is no steam disinfectant at the service of the Sanitary Staff.

### **Non-Notifiable Infectious Diseases**

Non-Notifiable Infectious Diseases : Intimations of non-notifiable diseases are received from the schools, but the staff is not sufficient to follow them up. Administrative action is consequently confined to excluding children of infected households from schools, and to school closure where this seems advisable.

During the earlier part of the year whooping cough and mumps were prevalent in the town and all the schools in the town were closed as under—

Cause of Closure		Period of Closure	No of weeks closed
Fairfield Boys,	Whooping Cough	Jan. 19th --Feb 6th	3
Girls and Infants			
St. Joseph's R.C.	Mumps	Feb 9th—Feb 16th	1
All Saints	Mumps and Chicken Pox	Feb 25th—Mar 20th	3½
Fairfield Infants			
	Whooping Cough	Mar 30th—April 9th	1½

### PREVALENCE AND CONTROL OVER TUBERCULOSIS.

Fourteen cases of pulmonary tuberculosis and three **Tuber culosis** of other forms of tuberculosis were notified during the year.

Five of these were notified from the Workhouse and of these only two were residents of the town, the other three having been admitted to the Workhouse from lodging houses in the town. One case was notified from Garlands Asylum.

Two were persons who had come home from South Africa.

Four of the fourteen are dead, five have left the district, one is at Garlands, one in Blencathra, one in the Workhouse Hospital and two are at home.

All cases are visited, and disinfectants are supplied if necessary. Advice is given with regard to infection. It is hoped that by the middle of the year a tuberculosis dispensary will be opened in the town. Examination of Sputum for tubercle bacilli is paid for by your Council.

Correlation between the County tuberculosis scheme and the Medical Officer of Health is complete as the Medical Officer of Health is Tuberculosis Officer for the district and the Tuberculosis Nurse is under the control of the Tuberculosis Officer.

All premises in which tuberculous persons have died are thoroughly disinfected.

The average death rate in the town from Pulmonary Tuberculosis for the 6 years 1908—1913 was

1·25 per 1000 of the population as compared with

·93 per 1000 the average for the County for the same period.

1·05 per 1000 the average for the Urban Districts of the County for the same period.

·77 per 1000 the average for the Rural Districts of the County for the same period.

The Midwives Act is administered by the County Council.



TABLE I—*Cockermouth Urban District.*

VITAL STATISTICS OF WHOLE DISTRICT DURING 1914 AND PREVIOUS YEARS.

Year.	Population estimated to Middle of each Year.	Births.			Total Deaths registered in the District.		Transferable Deaths.		Nett Deaths belonging to the District.				
		Un-corrected Number	Nett. Number.	Rate.	Number.	Rate.	of Non-residents registered in the District.	of Residents not registered in the District.	Under 1 year of age.		At all Ages.		
									Number.	Rate.	Number.	Rate.	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Rate per 1000 Nett Births.	11	12	13
1909	5410	136	136	24.2	111	20.5	29	5	11	80	87	16.0	
1910	5410	136	136	25.1	117	21.6	33	4	23	176	88	16.2	
1911	5203	138	138	26.5	93	17.8	24	6	12	87	75	14.4	
1912	5203	129	110	21.1	91	17.4	33	5	6	54	63	12.1	
1913	5167	113	105	20.9*	88	17.03	20	3	9	86	71	14.1*	
1914	5153	135	126	25.2*	101	19.6	25	6	16	127	82	16.4*	

Area of District in acres (land and inland water) { 2425.

Total population at all ages ... 5203 } At Census of 1911.  
Total families or separate occupiers ... 1175

NOTES.—This Table is arranged to show the gross births and deaths in the district, and the births and deaths properly belonging to it with the corresponding rates. For years before 1911 some of the corrected rates probably will not be available. The rates should be calculated per 1000 of the estimated gross population. In a district in which large Public Institutions for the sick or infirm seriously affect the statistics, the rates in Columns 5 and 13 may be calculated on a nett population, obtained by deducting from the estimated gross population the average number of inmates not belonging to the district in such institutions.

\*In calculating these rates allowance has been made for the population in the Workhouse, eleven-twelfths of which belong to other districts. The deaths and births among these eleven-twelfths (150 persons) are transferred to their own districts.

In the case of the standardised death-rate for the district this allowance is NOT made because the Registrar General states he has made this allowance in calculating his standardising factor.



**TABLE II.**—*Cockermouth Urban District.*

Cases of Infectious Disease notified during the  
Year 1914.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASE.	Cases notified in Whole District.							Total Cases removed to Hospital.
	Ages.—Years.							
	At all Ages.	Under 1	1 to 5.	5 to 15.	15 to 25.	25 to 45.	45 to 65.	
Smallpox .. ...								
Cholera, Plague .. ...								
Diphtheria (including Membranous croup) ...	5			4	1			
Erysipelas ... ..	1					1		
Scarlet fever .. ...	7			6	1			
Typhus fever ... ..								
Enteric fever ... ..								
Relapsing fever ... ..								
Continued fever ... ..								
Puerperal fever ... ..								
Cerebro-spinal Meningitis ... ..								
Poliomyelitis ... ..								
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	1	1						
Pulmonary Tuberculosis	14					8	6	
Other forms of do.	3			2		1		
TOTALS ... ..	31	1		12	2	10	6	

Isolation Hospital—None.

Blencathra Sanatorium receives cases from the Cumberland  
County Council.

TABLE III.—*Cockermouth Urban District.*

Causes of, and Ages at Death, during Year 1914.

[illegible]

**TABLE IV.**—*Cockermouth Urban District.*  
**INFANT MORTALITY DURING THE YEAR 1914.**  
 Nett Deaths from stated Causes at various Ages  
 under 1 Year of Age.

CAUSES OF DEATH.		Under 1 Week.	1-2 Weeks	2-3 Weeks	3-4 Weeks	Total under 4 weeks	1-3 Months	3-6 Months	6-9 Months	9-12 Months	Total Deaths under One Year.	
All Causes	Certified	3	2	1	1	7	2	2	1	3	15	
	Uncertified	0						1			1	
{	Small-pox	...										
	Chicken-pox	..										
	Measles	...										
	Scarlet Fever	...										
	Whooping Cough	...	...	...	1	1	...	1	1	1	4	
	Diphtheria and Croup	...										
	Erysipelas	...										
	Tuberculous Meningitis	...										
	Abdominal Tuberculosis	...										
	Other Tuberculous Diseases	...										
	Meningitis (not Tuberculous)	...										
	Convulsions	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	1	
	Laryngitis	...		1	...	1	...	...	...	1	2	
	Bronchitis	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	1	2	
	Pneumonia (all forms)	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	1	2	
	Diarrhoea	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	1	
	Enteritis	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...		
	Gastritis	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...		
	Syphilis	...										
	Rickets	...										
Suffocation, overlying	...											
Injury at Birth	...											
Atelectasis	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...			
{	Congenital Malformations	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...		
	Premature Birth	...	1	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	1	
	Atrophy, Debility, Marasmus	...	1	1	1	3	1	...	...	...	4	
	Other Causes	...	1	...	...	1			...	...	1	
TOTALS		...	3	2	1	1	7	2	3	1	3	16

Nett Births in the year—	legitimate	...	120.
	illegitimate	..	6.
Nett Deaths in the year—	legitimate infants		15.
	illegitimate	...	1.



# Cockermouth Urban District

Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health for the year  
1914, on the administration of the Factory and  
Workshop Act, 1901, in connection with—

## 1. Factories, Workshops, &c.

	Inspections	Written Notices
Workshops	34	0
Workplaces	10	3
	—	—
Totals	44	3

---

## 2. Defects Found.

	Found.	Remedied.
Want of Ventilation	2	0
Want of Drainage of Floors	1	1
Defective Sanitary Accommodation	2	0
	—	—
Totals	5	1

---

## 3. Home Work—Nil.

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## 4. Registered Workshops.

Bakehouses	...	18
Dressmakers and Milliners	...	15
Printers	...	3
Bootmakers and Cloggers	...	12
Stonemason	...	1
Smiths and Fitters	...	7
Joiners	...	6
Coachbuilders	...	2
Saddlers	...	2
Cabinet Makers and Upholsterers	...	2
Plumbers	...	6
Tailors	...	13
Basket Maker	...	1
Churnmaker	...	1
Painters	...	5
		—
	Total	94

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## 5. Other Matters.

Notified to H.M. Inspector of Factories—

Failure to affix Abstract of Act ... 1

17th March, 1915.

D. J. McLEISH,  
Medical Officer of Health.

# SANITARY INSPECTOR'S REPORT.

D. J. McLeish, M.D., D.P.H.,  
Medical Officer of Health,  
Cockermouth U.D.C.

Dear Sir,

I have pleasure in submitting to you my Annual Report for the year ending 31st December, 1914.

Nuisances reported to the Council	190
Nuisances reported and attended to	188
Notices served and complied with	43

## DETAILS OF SANITARY IMPROVEMENT WORKS.

Defective drains repaired, cleansed, etc.	...	14
Premises entirely redrained and intercepted	...	8
Defective or dirty W.C.'s cleansed, or pans replaced	...	51
Defective flushing apparatus repaired	...	6
Defective urinal drains repaired	...	2
Defective yard gullies and sink waste repaired	...	49
Defective downspouts and eavesgutters repaired	...	4
Number of cowsheds limewashed	...	8.
Accumulation of stable manure removed...	...	4
Defective and insufficient water supply remedied	...	3
Defective wash-house floors repaired	...	4
Pigs kept too near dwelling house	...	1
Pollution of river from tan-pits and slop-water	...	5
Rubbish deposited in the river	...	3
Defective yards repaired	...	4
Factories and Workshops limewashed	...	8
Accumulation of rubbish removed	...	2
Premises in a dirty condition cleansed	...	2
Midden privies converted into Water Closets	...	5
Horse middens defective roof and floor repaired	...	4
Gully inside Bakehouse removed	...	1
Dogs kept in slaughterhouse removed	...	2

## REFUSE REMOVAL.

The regular bi-weekly collection of domestic refuse and the weekly collection of trade refuse has been maintained throughout the town by the employees of the Council.

All the sewers and street chambers have been regularly flushed and cleansed throughout the year.

## WATER SUPPLY.

The supply of water to the Town has been good and constant, and the reservoirs and mains maintained in an efficient state throughout.

## NEW HOUSES.

Plans have been passed and approved by the Council for a Picture Hall, a Nursing Home, and a byre at Park House Farm; also four plans passed and approved for alterations or additions to premises.

## SLAUGHTERHOUSES AND OFFENSIVE TRADES.

In the town there are six slaughterhouses, one public and five private ones. Frequent visits have been made during the past year, and they have generally been kept in a cleanly condition. Some alterations has been made to two, such as concrete floors, walls cemented and drainage repaired.

The District has 9 offensive trades premises ; three Fellmongers, three Knacker Yards, and Bone Boiling Premises, one Gutscraper, and two Chandlers. These premises have had frequent and careful inspections during the past year and were found to be kept generally clean and properly limewashed throughout ; except towards the latter end of the year the premises of one of the Knacker Yards was found polluting the Bitter Beck, and the license has been stopped.

## INFECTIOUS DISEASE AND DISINFECTION.

On the notification of any infectious disease cases the premises were inspected forthwith, arrangements were made for the isolation of the patients in their own homes, and on recovery or death the premises and contents were thoroughly disinfected with formalin. An inspection of the sanitary conditions of the premises was also made and steps taken to remedy any defects which were found to exist.

During the Summer and Christmas holidays the Fairfield Schools were thoroughly cleansed and disinfected with formalin as a necessary precaution.

## HOUSING.

Under the Housing, Town Planning Act 1909. 130 houses have been inspected during the year. Of these three houses have been closed as unfit for human habitation.

Notices have been served for the necessary repairs, and a few have been complied with. Most of these houses are situated in yards and courts, and the defects found in most are of bad yards, insufficient water closet accommodation dampness and lack of ventilation.

FRANK J. REILLY,

Cert. Inst. M.I.M.E., C.R.S.I.,

Surveyor and Sanitary Inspector.





